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**Managing Public Perceptions: Reading Success in Agamemnon's
*diapheira***

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Deborah Beck

Andrew Riggsby

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William Clay Shrout IV, B.A.

Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

December 2016

Abstract

Managing Public Perceptions: Reading Success in Agamemnon's *diapheira*

William Clay Shrout IV, M.A.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2016

Supervisor: Deborah Beck

The success of Agamemnon's test (*diapheira*) in *Iliad* 2 is still a matter of debate among Homeric scholars. This report not only argues that Agamemnon's test was successful, but also will examine how skillfully Agamemnon manipulates his subordinates. Unlike his brash and shameless attempt to subordinate Achilles in *Iliad* 1, the Homeric poet depicts Agamemnon as conforming to more socially acceptable behavior in order to maintain his position as chief of the Achaean army. However, I argue that Agamemnon's attempt to present a more positive public image is a shrewd ploy to subordinate both the host of *laoi* and the elite *gerontes* in the wake of Achilles' rebellion.

Agamemnon's test unfolds gradually in four distinct narrative sections in *Iliad* 2. In Narrative Section 1 Zeus' deceptive dream, in the form of Nestor, serves as a catalyst for Agamemnon's behavioral change. This section also serves as a narrative turning point away from Agamemnon's failure to control Achilles in *Iliad* 1. In the Narrative Digression, a genealogy of Agamemnon's *skeptron* illustrates the ease with which chiefly power can be transferred and foreshadows his temporary bestowal of his power on Odysseus. In Narrative Section 2, Agamemnon presents himself to the *boule* of *gerontes* as acting with communal cohesion in mind, but omits his intention to capitalize on the *laoi*'s desperation and thus to force the *gerontes* to support his position as chief. Finally,

in Narrative Section 3 Odysseus reveals to the *gerontes* that Agamemnon has deceived them and successfully carries out Agamemnon's plan to ensure the loyalty of both elites and non-elites through two different rhetorical strategies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The present study attempts a new narrative approach to *Iliad* 2 by examining the text's expositions on the duties of an effective *basileus*. In ascertaining how successfully Agamemnon carries out these duties in the public eye, consideration will also be given to the success of Agamemnon's test. In this paper, I propose that through a radical shift in his consideration for the community, concealing his own motives, and a nominal transfer of power, Agamemnon secretly subordinates not only the *laoi*, but the *gerontes* and *basileis* to his authority as chief by appealing to positive public perception of his role as *basileus*. My reading suggests that Agamemnon becomes a much more competent leader after *Iliad* 1, and his competence is the result of his consideration for how his behavior is being interpreted by elites and non-elites. Agamemnon achieves success in his test primarily because he outwardly performs the duties of an effective *basileus*. Although Agamemnon outwardly performs his chiefly duties, in doing so he obfuscates his true intention to sow chaos in the army in order to force the *gerontes* to a public commitment of loyalty. By obfuscating his plan to capitalize on the *laoi*'s desperation and negative disposition towards him, Agamemnon's actions force the *gerontes* in a situation in which they are forced to advocate for his sole rulership to regain social cohesion.

My reading of *Iliad* 2 is informed primarily by scholars who have questioned or denied the success of Agamemnon's *peira*, as well as those who underestimate Agamemnon's

consciousness of the tenuousness of his position as *basileus*. Knox and Russo, for instance, reduce the event to ‘comic’ status, in that we see “far more of the human chicanery that can go into the high rules of war...”¹ While I agree that Agamemnon’s ‘chicanery’ is in full force in *Iliad* 2, I wish to question Knox and Russo’s assumption that Agamemnon’s test is a failure or a farce. Instead, I propose that Agamemnon is intentionally manipulating his subordinates, orchestrating a public display of loyalty that works to counter Achilles’ display of disloyalty in *Iliad* 1. I follow in the footsteps of James McGlew, who argues for the success of Agamemnon’s test and its deception of both *laoi* and *gerontes*². However, McGlew focuses on Agamemnon’s use of shame that clashes with Agamemnon’s deceptive call to flee Troy. What has not been sufficiently explored and which I will examine is how the Homeric poet depicts Agamemnon as working to manage his public image in *Iliad* 2. Agamemnon does so by presenting himself to the *gerontes* as performing his proper chiefly duties. The *gerontes*, then, serve as advocates of Agamemnon’s successful performance of these duties when tasked with reining in the *laoi* during the test. My analysis will focus on how Agamemnon manipulates and twists the emblems of chiefly power³, (namely, *themis* and the *skeptron*) to secure the loyalty of the *gerontes*, whose public advocacy for his rightful rule will

¹ Knox and Russo 1989, 354.

² McGlew 1989.

³ See *Iliad* 1.279; 2.86, and 14.93 for the political authority of the *basileus* and Carlier 2006, 104 for a discussion of economic authority in the Homeric chiefdom.

counteract Achilles' show of resistance. His motivation for this manipulation is based in a renewed consideration of how these emblems are perceived by elites and non elites, spurred by Zeus' own deceptive dream. By examining both his motivation for the test and his manipulation of his chiefly power, Agamemnon's test becomes a much richer and more integral episode in the *Iliad*.

In order to understand and contextualize Agamemnon's actions and tactics in *Iliad* 2, it is crucial to consider Achilles' insubordination in *Iliad* 1 as a devastating blow to Agamemnon's authority that propels him to conduct the test in *Iliad* 2. Contrary to what misleading translations of *basileus* (king, lord)⁴ might imply, there is a line of reasoning that suggests the *basileus*, as he appears in Homer, occupies a much more fluid position than our more medieval conceptions of a hereditary king or lord might suggest.⁵

Agamemnon's deliberate and secretive manipulation of people also suggests that his power is not entirely guaranteed by symbols like the *skeptron* or appeals to *themis*, but strongly contingent on public perception. Walter Donlan states that "the *laoi*, though predisposed to obey, can withhold the gift of obedience...completely blunting the chief's authority."⁶ Christoph Ulf stresses the fluidity of chiefly power and its dependence on popular opinion even more: "Agamemnon, and he is not alone- can lose his position as

⁴ See Gottschall 2008, 31-32.

⁵ See Wilson 2002, 12: "And though the interests that Homeric epic asserts are those of an elite, the perspectives of elites are not necessarily monolithic; they may accommodate competing interests, especially in periods of conflict over social formation." See also Raaflaub 2006, 457; Ulf 2009, 90.

⁶ Donlan 1998, 59.

basileus if he does not take the well-being of the *demos* into consideration, for the *demos*, or the *laos*, is the point of reference for every evaluation.”⁷ Ulf and Donlan focus on the role of the *laoi* in the evaluation of a *basileus*’ efficacy, which does not receive much focus in the *Iliad*. However, the effects of the *basileus*’ awareness of and conscious engagement with the opinion of the *laoi* (albeit indirectly) becomes apparent in the course of *Iliad* 2. There is also another threat to Agamemnon’s reputation along with the low opinion of the *laoi*: the opinion of the *gerontes* directly under his command, and how their cooperation with Agamemnon affects the judgement of the *laoi*. The fluidity of the *basileus*’ power is brought to light in *Iliad* 1, wherein Achilles, a *geron*, frames a highly personal conflict (the allocation of the *geras* between two men) as a matter of communal interest (namely, that Agamemnon could seize *anyone’s geras*⁸), which succeeds in undermining Agamemnon’s position and requires him to rehabilitate his reputation through the test in *Iliad* 2.

Achilles’ insubordination presents a problem for Agamemnon: if he cannot secure the loyalty of one of the *gerontes*, his authority can theoretically be questioned by any member of the rank and file⁹. Agamemnon, then, is not only presented with the insubordination of a *geron*, but the negative effects of Achilles’ insubordination on the *laoi*. First, I will briefly examine the events of *Iliad* 1, in which Achilles successfully

⁷ Ulf 2009, 89.

⁸ And in fact, Agamemnon says as much himself (*Il.* 1.137-139).

⁹ As we see in the case of Thersites.

calls Agamemnon's reputation into question by appealing directly to the judicial power of the *laoi*. The importance of this attack lies not only in Achilles' appeal to the rights of the *laoi*, but also in his challenge of Agamemnon's status as chief in his role as a member of the elite, posing a serious threat to Agamemnon's ability to command obedience among elites and non-elites. My analysis of Achilles' attack is the foundation for my examination of Agamemnon's test as evidence for Agamemnon's need to reconsider his methods of demanding and ensuring obedience from the Achaean army.

Achilles' Attack

Achilles' attack on Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1 directly addresses Agamemnon's lack of consideration for the *laoi*, and whose success in undermining his authority is central to my reading of *Iliad* 2. Agamemnon does not merely offend Achilles: he gives any member of the Achaean army a potential reason to question his commitment and fitness for rule in the existing system of governance. The *neikos* of *Iliad* 1 (and the cause of the entire Iliadic narrative) is the issue of how Agamemnon misallocates spoils (the *geras*), which threatens his credibility with a community dependant on his ability to manage socio-economic affairs fairly. In addition to the management of people,¹⁰ the duties of the *basileus* also include the management and distribution of prestige goods, making him the

¹⁰ Which my paper will address. Creamer and Haas 1985, 739-740 give clear and concise definitions of tribal and chiefdom systems of social organization, the latter of which comes close to describing the social organization of the Achaean army.

primary economic arbiter of the Achaean coalition.¹¹ Achilles' criticisms focus solely on Agamemnon's failure as an economic arbiter with communal interest in mind, which Achilles then frames as a justification for Agamemnon's inability to command:

ὦ μοι ἀναιδείην ἐπειμένε κερδαλέοφρον
πῶς τίς τοι πρόφρων ἔπεσιν πείθεται Ἀχαιῶν
ἢ ὁδὸν ἐλθέμεναι ἢ ἀνδράσιν ἴφι μάχεσθαι;
οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ Τρώων ἔνεκ' ἦλυθον αἰχμητῶν
δεῦρο μαχησόμενος, ἐπεὶ οὐ τί μοι αἵτιοί εἰσιν:

What, you clothed in shamelessness, you crafty of mind,
how can any Achaean eagerly obey your words,
either to go on a journey or to do battle? I did not come here
to fight because of the spearmen of Troy,
since they are in no way at fault towards me¹² (*Il.* 1.149-153)

Achilles questions Agamemnon's ability to command willing (πρόφρων) obedience by beginning his address with a series of personal shortcomings (ἀναιδείην, κερδαλέοφρον) are directly related to what Achilles perceives is Agamemnon's unfair handling of prestige goods. In the passage quoted above, though, Achilles explicitly links Agamemnon's failure as an economic arbiter with his ability to command a willing followership. Achilles justifies this claim by personalizing the stakes of the war as a whole: Achilles states that he has no real obligation to avenge negative reciprocity (the

¹¹ Donlan 1982, 153: "Inability to control one's wealth means inability to act as redistributor, which is the economic organization of political power in chiefdoms."

¹² All translations adapted from A.T. Murray.

demand or seizure of goods without compensation¹³) from the Trojans, since they have not raided his homeland (*Il.* 1.154-155). This is a significant concern for not only Achilles, but the entire army whose lands were not raided, and thus were not obliged to avenge negative reciprocity, nor to sacrifice their own potential *time* for the sake of honoring a chief who will take it by force¹⁴. This tactic is particularly effective against Agamemnon's "generally recognized capacity for leadership"¹⁵, given that he has marginalized both the *laoi*, who have the very power to ratify that capacity for leadership, as well as Achilles himself, the army's best warrior. However, the real killing blow to Agamemnon's reputation is that these criticisms are leveled *publically* by a member of the elite, bringing into sharp focus Agamemnon's need to not only prevent further elite insubordination, but also to repair the damage done to his reputation after the *neikos*. Achilles' insubordination sets a dangerous precedent for public criticism (which rears its ugly head in Thersites' invective) and introduces the possibility of the dissolution of the army on the authority of a *geron*¹⁶. Agamemnon's position as chief, then, is threatened by

¹³ Van Wees 1998, 23.

¹⁴ McGlew 1989, 287 rightly states that: "τιμή usually passes between individuals belonging to different social strata. Hence it often marks a basic attitude of subordination and domination, and, indeed, when it is exchanged through the various levels of the social hierarchy, it may constitute the network of allegiances at the foundation of a kingdom." In his shamelessness, Agamemnon threatens to completely overturn the network of allegiances that function on the distribution of *time*, and thus the cohesion of the army. Also see Wilson 2002.

¹⁵ Gottschall 2008, 31-32.

¹⁶ Which manifests as resistance to Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1 and 2.

members of his own class and those he theoretically commands because of Achilles' generalization of his loss of *time* to the entire army.

Agamemnon has committed a fatal error in distancing himself politically and socially not only from Achilles, but from the *laoi*, who judge worth by awarding spoils of war, and thus have a significant role in influencing elite behavior. Agamemnon's failure as a *basileus* lies in the fact that he has infringed upon the privilege of the *laoi* to award Achilles with the *geras* they believed he deserved. In other words, Agamemnon has overestimated his personal claims to economic distinction, which has negative political ramifications for his reputation among the *laoi*, but potentially catastrophic consequences if he continues to infringe upon the honors due to the elites. Achilles is not the only *basileus* who understands the potential damage that Agamemnon's overestimation of his personal power can cause: Nestor, in his appeal for reconciliation, concedes that Agamemnon carries a certain personal distinction as a *pherteros* (mightier) leader, but advises him *not* to use this distinction to take away Achilles' *geras*¹⁷:

μήτε σὺ τόνδ' ἀγαθὸς περ ἐὼν ἀποαίρεο κούρην,
ἀλλ' ἕα ὥς οἱ πρῶτα δόσαν γέρας υἷες Ἀχαιῶν

Do not, mighty though you are, seek to take the girl from him,
but leave her, since first the sons of the Achaeans gave her to him as a prize (*Iliad* 1.275-276)

¹⁷ See Clay 2014 for a closer analysis of Nestor's rhetoric of compromise.

Nestor understands that Agamemnon can (and does) use his distinction as *wanax basileus* to take Briseis, but that he has a responsibility to respect the agents of distribution, the υἱες Ἀχαιῶν, on whose opinion of Agamemnon's ability as chief to allot work and reward fairly is critically dependant. Nestor acknowledges that the υἱες Ἀχαιῶν have agency in the distribution of the *geras* (πρῶτα δόσαν γέρας) and that Agamemnon should respect this decision, even though he is noble (ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν). By usurping control of distribution, Agamemnon widens the social distance between *basileus* and *laoi*, and consequently, begins to undermine his claim to rule by neglecting to fairly recognize the role of distributors that the *laoi* holds and from which the elites benefit. Nestor's warning and Achilles' attack are both motivated by an underlying organizational pattern of Iliadic society: an interdependent relationship between elites and non-elites that Agamemnon threatens to destroy. By threatening to take Achilles' *geras*, Agamemnon endangers this entire system of exchange, thereby potentially marginalizing himself from anyone who partakes in it.

Agamemnon's Response

Achilles' attack and Nestor's warning both serve to contextualize the *neikos* of *Iliad* 1 as a conflict that could undermine the cohesiveness of the army under Agamemnon's command, resulting in disorder and sedition. This is the expectation that the Iliadic narrative sets up, which must clearly be reversed in order that the narrative continue. At the beginning of *Iliad* 2, Agamemnon is presented with two problems. The first problem

he faces is that he has infringed upon the distributive rights of the *laoi*, who could present resistance and stymie his authority. The second is more serious: a *geron* has made a public statement of disloyalty, which sets a precedent of elite behavior that Agamemnon must remedy. Agamemnon must solve these two problems, which he does in one fell swoop during the test. First, he secures the loyalty of the *gerontes* by making a public display of proper behavior. Second, Agamemnon, having not revealed his intent to capitalize on the *laoi*'s unruliness, forces the *gerontes* to communicate this sense of loyalty to the *laoi* in their disarray. Regarding the *gerontes*, Walter Donlan argues that "despite his flawed leadership, the other chiefs and the army as a whole consistently support Agamemnon's rightful rulership in the interests of communal solidarity, siding with him against 'rebels' from the top and the bottom of the social scale."¹⁸ However, given the severity of the outcome of *Iliad* 1, I argue that Agamemnon takes no chances in assuming that he has the full support of anyone under his command, and that his test must begin with his insurance that the *gerontes* will not rebel as Achilles did.

Scholarship is still divided on the success or failure of Agamemnon's test,¹⁹ but few scholars have taken into account the *motive* behind the test. I assert this motive to both

¹⁸ Donlan 1998, 68n17.

¹⁹ Lowenstam 1993, 80 calls the test a "dismal failure"; Haubold 2000, 59-60 and Kouklandis 1999, 37 also label the test a failure, contrary to Agamemnon's expectations.

rely on the *basileis* without a questioned reputation²⁰ to help rein in the army, but also to skillfully subordinate them to centralized rule by obliging them to a commitment of loyalty by actively portraying his interests and behavior as proper for a *basileus*. In this test, Agamemnon places the responsibility of reaffirming his power not in his own pronouncements, but in the pronouncements of the *gerontes*. Erwin Cook has suggested that “by ordering the generals to restrain their men, Agamemnon effectively shifts responsibility for failure to capture Troy onto the *gerontes*, and he does so in a manner that will still allow him to take credit for their success” (2003, 173). Agamemnon is clearly shifting responsibility onto the shoulders of the *gerontes*, but the responsibility Agamemnon shifts is to express to the *laoi* from whom he is disenfranchised, his own fitness for rule, which Odysseus ultimately accomplishes by calling for a single *basileus* to rule while, importantly, holding Agamemnon’s *skeptron*²¹. In other words, Agamemnon seeks “to oblige the *hegetores* to a public commitment of loyalty to the figure with the highest position.”²² I see this process of shifting responsibility in order to ultimately take back control of the army as taking place within four distinct narrative sections, all of which serve to illustrate Agamemnon’s successful navigation and skillful use of chiefly behavior and privilege as it is perceived by both *laoi* and *gerontes*.

²⁰ The *laoi* hold a generally positive attitude towards Odysseus in particular because of his good deeds (μυρί’...ἔσθλα [Il. 2.272]), good counsel (βουλὰς...ἀγαθὰς [Il. 2.273]), and leadership in war (πόλεμόν τε κορυσσών [Il. 2.273]).

²¹ Il. 2.204-206.

²² Donlan 1979, 60. Donlan only briefly suggests this possibility, and sees both Odysseus and Nestor as critical to Agamemnon’s plan to rehabilitate his authority.

In Narrative section 1, Zeus forms a plan to deceive Agamemnon and sends his delegate, the Dream, to carry out his plan (*Il.* 2.1-15). The Dream, in the form of Nestor, then appraises Agamemnon of the duties he ought to be performing as a *basileus* (*Il.* 2.16-34). Dream Nestor introduces into the narrative the duties of a successful *basileus*, which serves as a turning point away from Agamemnon's behavior in *Iliad* 1 and foreshadows a change in Agamemnon's tactics to ensure obedience. As Cook observes, Agamemnon understands his forces' resentment because he brought disease and infighting into the army.²³ This suggests to me that Agamemnon meditated on the distinct possibility of chaos, and planned to redirect that energy onto the individual *gerontes*. Agamemnon ultimately does capitalize on the instability in the army, and it is this unspoken realization of Agamemnon's that motivates his plan to use the *gerontes* as tools to rehabilitate his public image.

In a brief Narrative digression, as the army gathers in the *agore*, there is a genealogy of Agamemnon's *skeptron*, which foreshadows Agamemnon's transfer of power to Odysseus. The digression illustrates the fluidity of chiefly power, a reality of Iliadic leadership that Agamemnon cleverly manipulates to his advantage. The foreshadowing of a transfer of chiefly power indicates that he intended to use a member of the *gerontes*, who turns out to be Odysseus, to act in his stead to make a public commitment of loyalty to both elites and non-elites.

²³ Cook 2003, 167n7.

In Narrative Section 2, before the *agore* of the entire army, Agamemnon then gathers the *gerontes* and presents his plan in a proper *boule* (*Il.* 2.53-83). Spurred by the Dream to act with more communal interests in mind, Agamemnon first organizes the *gerontes*, to whom he proposes the test. However, Agamemnon does not openly betray his renewed concern for social rebellion breeding among the *laoi*, but rather only appeals to communal solidarity and warfare. He importantly leaves out his motivation for the test: to ensure the obedience of the *gerontes* not by brute force, as in *Iliad* 1, but through deception and the creation of a dire situation (the flight of the army).

In Narrative Section 3, Odysseus has received the *skeptron* from Agamemnon, reminding the *basileis* of the test and reprimanding the *laoi* using vastly different rhetorical techniques that serve to rehabilitate Agamemnon's image and reinforce his rule (*Il.* 2.185-210). Finally, after violently reprimanding Thersites, the approval of the *laoi* represents the successful completion of Agamemnon's test by using the fluidity of chiefly power to place the responsibility of controlling the army in many disparate, but unified hands, rather than relying on his damaged reputation (*Il.* 2.211-277). The narrative of the test itself, then, is a revelation of Agamemnon's plan to utilize the *gerontes'* and *basileis'* loyalty to control the army. Odysseus explains this using two distinct rhetorical tactics to express Agamemnon's enactment of re-subordinating both *basileis* and *laoi*, respectively. The importance of Agamemnon being appraised of proper chiefly behavior and conforming to these behaviors throughout the first half of *Iliad* 2 is that Odysseus

ultimately reveals Agamemnon's intent for the test in the third narrative section, which was the same as his intent in *Iliad* 1: to maintain his position as best of the Achaeans. In *Iliad* 2, Agamemnon more subtly attempts and achieves what he fails to do with Achilles by relying on publically recognized behaviors and symbols of proper chiefly authority. Unorthodox as it is, the test fits logically within Agamemnon's bid for control, and is the result of his renewed consideration and public manipulation of traditionally sanctioned chiefly duties. Arguments about aristocratic ideology's importance in the *Iliad* aside, the success of Agamemnon's test ultimately provides us with valuable insight into the consistency of the tactics utilized by Iliadic elites, from the proper execution of chiefly duties to specifically elite rhetorical devices, to uphold their authority among both their peers and subordinates.

Chapter 2: Narrative Section 1

At the beginning of *Iliad* 2, Zeus' deceptive dream (hereafter called Dream Nestor) not only reiterates Agamemnon's failures as a chief, but also clearly defines the two groups Agamemnon has wronged: the *gerontes* and the *laoi*. These two groups are not only distinct, but have different, and at this point, contradictory impulses: the *gerontes*, to maintain social cohesion (as evidenced by Odysseus' cooperation with Agamemnon in the return of Briseis) and the *laoi*, to move towards social dissolution. In this section, I will focus on the *laoi*'s impulse towards disobedience, and how this situation forces Agamemnon to rely on the *gerontes* to rehabilitate his reputation and consolidate his power. After examining the evidence for widespread discontentment with Agamemnon as chief, I will show that Agamemnon is faced with the necessity of skillfully appealing to the *gerontes*' desire for social cohesion to maintain his authority in the army.

Dream Nestor clearly defines the two groups Agamemnon has failed, the *laoi* and the *gerontes*, by rebuking him for neglecting two specific chiefly duties: to take the *laoi* into consideration and to engage in bouletic activity, which implicitly involves the *gerontes*.

Dream Nestor explicitly locates Agamemnon within a larger decision-making hierarchy²⁴ during his address, which Agamemnon will ultimately rely on to reaffirm his position as chief:

²⁴ See Creamer and Haas 1985, 740 for a useful discussion of decision-making hierarchies in chiefdoms as they appear in Central America.

οὐ χρεὶ παννύχιον εὔδειν βουλευφόρον ἄνδρα
ὃ λαοὶ τ' ἐπιτετράφονται καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε

A man that is a counselor must not sleep the whole night,
one to whom an army is entrusted, and on whom rest many cares (*Il.* 2.24-25)

Dream Nestor directly addresses Agamemnon's failings as a chief in *Iliad* 1 and thus introduces the possibility of success that would follow a change of tactics in asserting dominance. Agamemnon has an obligation to the *laoi*, who have specifically been "entrusted" to him (ἐπιτετράφονται). In *Iliad* 1.22-25, Agamemnon acts contrary to the wishes of the *laoi* regarding Chryses, and deliberately challenges their distributive privileges by seizing the *geras* they allotted to Achilles. Dream Nestor's advice is clear: Agamemnon must take the *laoi* into consideration more urgently now because he neglected to do so in *Iliad* 1. According to Dream Nestor, Agamemnon must also present himself as a "counsel-making man" (βουλευφόρον ἄνδρα), which involves cooperating with the *gerontes* in the *boule*. Agamemnon must work within the constraints of the *boule* if he is to present himself as an effective *basileus* to both groups, but the loyalty of each group is affected in different ways. His failure to take wise counsel in the *agore* in *Iliad* 1 led to the departure of one of the *gerontes*, Achilles. To ensure that another *neikos* does not arise, Agamemnon must present himself as conforming to these chiefly duties, first by working cooperatively with the *gerontes* in the *boule*.

Dream Nestor's advice to take the entire community into consideration is not specific to *Iliad* 2, but is a recurring theme in the *Iliad* and a consistently referenced duty for an effective Iliadic *basileus*. The duties Dream Nestor outlines in *Iliad* 2 also come straight out of the real Nestor's mouth in *Iliad* 10 and constitute what I call the language of elite recognition. The poem presents these duties consistently: both Dream Nestor and the real Nestor expect the *basileus* to take the *laoi* into consideration and to engage in bouletic activity. By virtue of coming from a *geron* himself or the convincing appearance of one, other elites recognize the execution of these duties as critical to the success of a *basileus*, because they express a willingness to act on behalf of the community, and thus the *basileus*' fitness for rule. The real Nestor threatens to quarrel with Menelaus in *Iliad* 10 under circumstances similar to *Iliad* 2, namely, that Nestor believes Menelaus is asleep while he should be acting on behalf of the community:

ἀλλὰ φίλον περ ἔόντα καὶ αἰδοῖον Μενέλαον
 νεικέσω, εἴ περ μοι νεμεσήσῃς, οὐδ' ἐπικεύσω
 ὥς εὔδει, σοὶ δ' οἴω ἐπέτρεψεν πονέεσθαι.
 νῦν ὄφελεν κατὰ πάντα ἀριστήας πονέεσθαι
 λισσόμενος: χρεὶώ γὰρ ἰκάνεται οὐκέτ' ἀνεκτός.

But Menelaus I will reproach, dear though he is and respected,
 even if you should be angry with me, nor will I hide my thought,
 since he is sleeping and has allowed you to toil alone.
 Now he ought to have been toiling among all the chief men,
 begging them, for need past all bearing has come. (*Il.* 10.114-118)

There are strikingly similar motifs in the real Nestor's threat to Menelaus as those found in the Dream Nestor's call for Agamemnon to change his behavior. Real Nestor threatens to quarrel with Menelaus (νεικέσω), despite his admission that he is generally respectable (αἰδοῖον Μενέλαον), which recalls Achilles' complaint of Agamemnon's shamelessness which caused the *neikos* in *Iliad* 1. Menelaus is also described as being entrusted with a certain labor (ἐπέτρεψεν), the same term that Dream Nestor uses to describe Agamemnon's obligation to the *laoi* (ἐπιτετράφεται, *Il.* 2.25) in *Iliad* 2. The recurrence of these phrases is indicative of a consistent set of duties which a *basileus* must follow in order to command obedience through the *laoi*'s recognition of the execution of these duties. Another parallel with *Iliad* 2's outline of the duties of a *basileus* is Real Nestor's statement that Menelaus should be "beseeching among all the best men" (κατὰ πάντας ἀριστήας). In *Iliad* 10, Menelaus should be ranging throughout πάντας ἀριστήας in order to form a *boule* (χρεὼ βουλῆς ἐμὲ καὶ σὲ διοτρεφὲς ὦ Μενέλαε, *Il.* 10.43). Likewise, Agamemnon will also be charged with forming a *boule* and relying on the best men, the *gerontes*, in *Iliad* 2 as an integral part of his role as *basileus*. Similarly, as Menelaus does not take part in the night raid of *Iliad* 10, Agamemnon does not play a direct role in restraining the *laoi* in *Iliad* 2. The poem thus presents the audience with a mini type-scene in *Iliad* 2 that introduces the theme and mechanisms of proper chiefly activity; a leading *basileus* is reprimanded for his alleged abdication of duty, and in turn relies on the work of other *gerontes* to achieve a decision

made in counsel. The importance of these similarities is that the *Iliad* presents a consistent set of duties that an effective *basileus* must execute. More importantly, if a *basileus* does not perform these duties, those who recognize a failure can quarrel with him, as Achilles does in *Iliad* 1 and Nestor threatens to do in *Iliad* 10. The identification of these duties is critical to understanding why Agamemnon radically changes his behavior in order that these behaviors be publically recognized. Importantly, though, he must enlist the *gerontes*, one of whom has already rebelled, in order to contribute and guide the public's recognition of these behaviors, and so must present himself not as concerned with maintaining power, but maintaining social cohesion.

At first glance, the *neikos* of *Iliad* 1 appears to be personal, but Achilles' insults and the poetic narrative suggest that both the poet and Achilles are concerned with how Agamemnon's behaviors give the *laoi* (and Achilles himself) reason to be disobedient. In contrast to *Iliad* 2, the first decision that Agamemnon makes in *Iliad* 1 is to completely ignore the shouts of all the Achaeans to respect Chryses and accept his *apoina* (1.22-25), which characterizes the rest of his behavior in *Iliad* 1, ending in his unilateral decision to seize Achilles' *geras* and threatening the social structures that govern the relationships between elites and non-elites. Agamemnon's rejection of the popular opinion explicitly marks his lack of *aidos*, which characterizes his disregard for the *laoi*:

ἐνθ' ἄλλοι μὲν πάντες ἐπευφήμησαν Ἀχαιοὶ
αἰδεῖσθαι θ' ἱερῆα καὶ ἀγλαὰ δέχθαι ἄποινα:

ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι ἤνδανε θυμῷ,
ἀλλὰ κακῶς ἀφίει, κρατερὸν δ' ἐπὶ μῦθον ἔτελλε

Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted their agreement,
to respect the priest and accept the glorious ransom;
yet this did not please the heart of Agamemnon, son of Atreus,
but he sent him away harshly, and laid out a stern command (*Il.* 1.22-25)

The Achaeans collectively shout assent (ἐπευφήμησαν) for Agamemnon to both respect the priest (αἰδεῖσθαι) and accept his *apoina* (δέχθαι), neither of which pleases Agamemnon (οὐκ...ἤνδανε θυμῷ). Instead, he acts shamelessly by rejecting the Achaeans' call to respect Chryses, which becomes Achilles' term for Agamemnon throughout *Iliad* 1: ὧ μοι ἀναιδείην ἐπιεμένε κερδαλέοφρον (*Il.* 1.149). Achilles' charge of shamelessness and the poet's description of Agamemnon's rejection of *aidos* both point to the offense he has committed against *geron* and *laoi*, given that each group suffered because of his selfish decision to take Briseis. On the one hand, the result of the offense against Achilles is clear: he withdraws from battle. On the other hand, the results of any apparent offense against the *laoi* are subtle and must be examined further to understand the decisions Agamemnon makes in *Iliad* 2.

Agamemnon's shameless behavior in *Iliad* 1 and Achilles' resistance gives members of the army reason to reject Agamemnon's fitness for rule. In *Iliad* 1, Achilles questions Agamemnon's ability to command willing (πρόφρων, *Il.* 1.150) obedience during the *neikos*, which the poet describes as unwillingness to carry out his commands throughout

the Achaean army²⁵. After sending Chryses back to her father (*Il.* 1.309-311),

Agamemnon's persistent, self-centered quarrel with Achilles caused Talthibius and Eurybates, Agamemnon's heralds, to perform their duties unwillingly:

τὼ δ' ἀέκοντε βάτην παρὰ θιν' ἀλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο,
Μυρμιδόνων δ' ἐπὶ τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκέσθην

Unwilling, the two of them went along the shore of the untiring sea,
and came to the ships of the Myrmidons (*Il.* 1.327-328)

Achilles' assertion that Agamemnon would not be able to command a willing following begins to manifest. Agamemnon's heralds discharge their duty to take back Briseis from Achilles, but do so unwillingly (τὼ δ' ἀέκοντε). Briseis herself is even described as leaving unwillingly (ἧ δ' ἀέκουσ', *Il.* 1.348), illustrating the extent to which Agamemnon's demand negatively affects non-elites, which in turn reflects his lack of fitness as a leader.

In addition to these signs of social dissolution in *Iliad* 1, the poet explicitly shows the *laoi* demonstrating similar resistance to Agamemnon in *Iliad* 2 not as unwilling individuals, as with Briseis, Talthibius and Eurybates, but as a corporate body primed for dispersion and flight. The poet uses both a simile and key terms that show a tension in the cohesion of the *laoi*, a tension that Agamemnon deliberately exploits in *Iliad* 2. The poet introduces the *laoi* with a simile, comparing the contingents to swarms of bees. At first

²⁵ Postlethwaite 1988, 133-135 convincingly argues that the Thersites episode also clarifies the degree to which Agamemnon's authority has deteriorated among the *laoi*. They are ultimately relieved by the punishment the scapegoat Thersites incurs in their stead.

glance, swarms of bees may suggest social cohesion²⁶, but a closer analysis reveals that the tribes of bees are tending towards dispersion:

ἤύτε ἔθνεα εἴσι μελισσάων ἀδινάων
πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς αἰεὶ νέον ἐρχομενάων,
βοτρυδὸν δὲ πέτονται ἐπ' ἄνθεσιν εἰαρινοῖσιν:
αἰ μὲν τ' ἔνθα ἄλῃς πεποτήαται, αἰ δέ τε ἔνθα

Just as tribes of swarming bees emerge from some hollow rock,
constantly coming on afresh, and in clusters over the flowers
of spring fly in throngs, some here, some there (*Il.* 2.87-90)

Although the groups of soldiers are, in reality, coming together in the assembly, the simile focuses on the fragmentation of these groups of people as they depart from a central location (πέτρης ἐκ γλαφυρῆς), which foreshadows the fragmented groups Agamemnon encourages in his speech to the *laoi*. The poet describes the tribes of bees as flying variously here and there (αἰ μὲν τ' ἔνθα ἄλῃς πεποτήαται, αἰ δέ τε ἔνθα) not as a unified whole, but in “clusters” (βοτρυδὸν).²⁷ The poet’s focus on cyclic movement out and back in discrete clusters foreshadows the cyclic movement of the soldiers back to the ships that Agamemnon will incite in his test. The effect of this simile is to expand the scope of dissent we see in *Iliad* 1. Disobedience and an unwillingness to follow Agamemnon is not an isolated phenomenon, unique to a few individuals. By focusing on

²⁶ As the similes at *Il.* 2.459-473 do before the catalogue of ships.

²⁷ For the “harmonious reciprocity” of the opposing movement of bees and men, see Feeney 2014.

the *laoi* as a whole, the poet illustrates the extent to which Agamemnon's behavior has encouraged disobedience among even non-elites.

Along with the simile that foreshadows the *laoi*'s eventual pattern of movement and fragmentation, the poet drives home the degree to which the *laoi* are predisposed to social dissolution by characterizing the *agore* as extremely disorderly. Johannes Haubold notes that the institution of the assembly in the *Iliad* is an unstable social construction that relies on the agency of a "shepherd of the people"²⁸ and that the transition from the *laoi*'s tendency to resist communal action is "marked by the noise they make upon arrival [to the assembly]."²⁹ In *Iliad* 2, the *laoi* are described as making an ὄμαδος³⁰, or din, a characteristic of an agitated assembly³¹ in terms that imply that Agamemnon, the ostensible shepherd of the people, is met with particular resistance that demands a completely different approach than the one he took in *Iliad* 1. Between the rowdy din of the *agore*, the dispersion simile, and the unwillingness of select characters to cooperate with Agamemnon's commands, the poet has indicated that Agamemnon has done a poor job of taking the *laoi* into consideration. In order to maintain his authority, he must change his tactics so as not to dishonor and discourage his subordinates. With substantial evidence suggesting that the *laoi* are becoming increasingly unmanageable, Agamemnon

²⁸ Haubold 2000, 33.

²⁹ Haubold 2000, 54.

³⁰ *Il.* 2.96.

³¹ τετρήχει δ' ἀγορή (*Il.* 2.95)

reasonably relies on a different course of action: to first engage in bouletic activity and cooperate with the *gerontes*.

Although Agamemnon has seriously damaged his credibility among the *laoi*, he is presented with the possibility of ensuring the *gerontes*' cooperation through the language of elite recognition. As I mentioned above, the language of elite recognition is an expression of interest in communal cohesion through the execution of two chiefly duties: to take the *laoi* into consideration and to hold the *boule*. While Agamemnon would be hard-pressed to instill confidence in the disobedient *laoi*, he can present himself to the *gerontes* as having regard for the *aidos* Achilles accused him of lacking and by engaging in bouletic activity to ostensibly include the *gerontes* in his decision-making process. The poet signals Agamemnon's inclination to pursue a productive relationship with the *gerontes* first by describing Agamemnon's respect for Nestor, when the Dream Nestor appears above him:

στῆ δ' ἄρ' ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς Νηληϊῶ υἱ ἑοικώς
Νέστορι, τὸν ῥα μάλιστα γερόντων τί' Ἀγαμέμνων

Nestor, whom above all the elders Agamemnon
held in honor, likening himself to him (*Il.* 2.20-21)

The poet makes Agamemnon's respect for Nestor clear with the verb τίω, which has the same semantic range as τιμάω.³² The importance of Agamemnon's genuine feeling of

³² LSJ (A.II)

respect and reverence is that it clashes sharply with his utter lack of respect for his fellow *geron* Achilles in *Iliad* 1. The juxtaposition of Agamemnon's characterization in *Iliad* 1 as lacking in *aidos*³³ with his special respect (μάλιστα) for a member of the *gerontes* seems to indicate that Agamemnon is moving away from his initial pattern of disrespect. However, Agamemnon's commitment to his execution of the two chiefly duties becomes suspect when we examine the actions he takes to transfer the responsibility of controlling the *laoi* off of himself and onto the *gerontes*. Dream Nestor's speech clearly presents Agamemnon with a set of duties that he must carry out, and Agamemnon's feeling of respect towards the appearance of Nestor suggests at the beginning of *Iliad* 2 that Agamemnon will have a complete *volte-face* in terms of his respect and consideration for both *gerontes* and *laoi*. However, the manner in which he executes the duties reveals that he is not only acutely aware of the *laoi*'s threat to his authority through their impulses towards disobedience, but that the way to control their impulses is first to ensure, through respect and the apparent execution of his chiefly duties, the complete cooperation of the *gerontes* by any means necessary.

³³ See his direct refusal to show *aidos* to Chryses at *Il.* 1.22-25 and Achilles' insult at *Il.* 1.149.

Chapter 3: Narrative Digression

Although the poet implies that Agamemnon will cooperate more closely with the *gerontes* to control the army, he does not so much *cooperate* with the *gerontes*, but rather completely transfers the *skeptron*, a symbol of his authority, to them. This comes as a surprise to Odysseus, who, in fact, receives the *skeptron* himself. In this section, I will first examine the tool by which Agamemnon transfers his authority, the *skeptron*, and how this not unprecedented transfer of authority functions in the *Iliad*. Next, I will focus on Odysseus' reception of the *skeptron* as a reaction to his own revelation about the *laoi*'s chaotic flight to the ships. The transferability of chiefly authority, Agamemnon's intentional bestowal of this authority on Odysseus, and Odysseus' own reaction to the *laoi*'s flight all serve as evidence that Agamemnon had a very clear idea of what he would do to reaffirm his power, and that the *gerontes* were not privy to the chaos he would cause among the *laoi*.

With his reputation damaged, Agamemnon relies partly on his *skeptron*, partly on Odysseus, to achieve his goal of reaffirming his position in the army. The value and authority of the Homeric *skeptron* lies not only in its symbolism of speech authority, but also the way in which this symbolism *complements* and aligns with the public's opinion of whoever wields it. A brief narrative digression in *Iliad* 2 on the genealogy of Agamemnon's *skeptron* serves as our focal point for the "rules" governing the symbolic value of the *skeptron*, and how Agamemnon exploits these rules for his own gain. The

passage in question, the genealogy, serves two purposes: the first is to focus on the bestowal and reception of chiefly power as a key component of the test, and the second is to set the stage for Agamemnon's intentional bestowal of power on Odysseus as his primary, but unwitting advocate:³⁴

Ἥφαιστος μὲν δῶκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι,
αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς δῶκε διακτόρῳ ἀργεῖφόντῃ·
Ἑρμείας δὲ ἄναξ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ,
αὐτὰρ ὃ αὖτε Πέλοψ δῶκ' Ἀτρεΐ ποιμένι λαῶν,
Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρον Θυέστη,
αὐτὰρ ὃ αὖτε Θυέστ' Ἀγαμέμνονι λείπε φορῆναι,
πολλῇσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἄργεϊ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν.

Hephaestus gave [the *skeptron*] to lord Zeus, son of Kronos,
Then Zeus gave it to the Messenger, the slayer of Argus:
Lord Hermes gave it to Horse-Driving Pelops,
Then Pelops gave it to Atreus, shepherd of the people,
And Atreus, as he died, left it to Thyestes of Many Lambs,
Then Thyestes left it for Agamemnon to wield,
And to rule many ships and all of Argos (*Iliad* 2.102-108)

To address the first claim, that this genealogy illustrates the fluidity of chiefly power, we must examine the poem's variance in “giving” and “leaving” in the genealogy. A living figure actively “gives” the *skeptron* (δῶκε) four times, and only left twice, once when Atreus dies (Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων ἔλιπεν, *Il.* 2.106).³⁵ The genealogy focuses more heavily, then, on the intentional bestowal of chiefly power, and not de facto inheritance.

³⁴ Odysseus is the logical choice to lead a public commitment of loyalty to Agamemnon, given that he demonstrated his loyalty before in the return of Chryseis (*Il.* 1.308-311), which I discuss below.

³⁵ Kirk 1985, 127 suggests that Hermes role as a messenger, and not a *basileus*, gives δῶκεν a different connotation.

The fluidity here is the potential for a smooth transfer and bestowal, particularly in the context of damaged reputations, of which there is a considerable amount in the Atreid bloodline. The genealogy prefigures Agamemnon's successful bestowal of his power on Odysseus as a natural consequence of his damaged reputation and authority. Despite the distinction the poet makes between giving and leaving, the bearer of the *skeptron* will still rule (ἀνάσσειν, Il. 2.208), indicating that the reception of the *skeptron*, whether through inheritance or direct, intentional bestowal, will afford the wielder a certain amount of authority. In order to understand the quality and limitations of the *skeptron*'s authority, we must examine two instances in which the power of the *skeptron* is deconstructed in the *Iliad*: Achilles' withdrawal in *Iliad* 1 and Diomedes' rebuke of Agamemnon in *Iliad* 9.

This transfer of power by bestowing the *skeptron* also occurs in *Iliad* 1 during the *neikos*. Achilles bestows temporary power through the *skeptron* to express solidarity with his supporters, the υἱες Ἀχαιῶν, when Agamemnon successfully challenges his chiefly privileges in *Iliad* 1. Before making his defiant departure, Achilles places the judgement of what is *themis*, and thus the *basileus*' claim to authority, in the hands of the υἱες Ἀχαιῶν, whom he calls δικασπόλοι (Il. 1.237-239). He thus attributes to the *laoi* the power to authoritatively evaluate the *basileus* Agamemnon's behavior. This is a bold, but not illogical move; from Achilles' perspective, Agamemnon, the highest representative of

the elite *gerontes*, has not acted as a fair judge by taking Briseis, but the *laoi* were, in fact, fair in awarding her to him:

νῦν αὐτέ μιν [σκῆπτρον] υἱες Ἀχαιῶν
ἐν παλάμῃς φορέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἳ τε θέμιστας
πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύεται:

And now the sons of the Achaeans that give judgement
bear it in their hands, those who guard the laws that
come from Zeus (*Il.* 1.237-239)

Achilles argues that the υἱες Ἀχαιῶν act as “judges” (and not “law-givers” in this context) of what is *themis*. But they also physically hold the *skeptron* (τόδε σκῆπτρον , *Il.* 1.234) in their own hands (ἐν παλάμῃς φορέουσι). Achilles, by relinquishing the *skeptron* and throwing it on the ground, transfers this authority directly to the *laoi*, just as Agamemnon lays his *skeptron* in the hands of a loyal and worthy partisan, Odysseus.³⁶ Achilles’ statement supports the claim that Agamemnon’s power is not wholly vested in the authority of the *skeptron* and his heavily dependant on those the original bearer has confidence in to uphold their own ideals. Achilles, having lost faith in the elite ideology Agamemnon represents, places the judgemental authority of the *skeptron* into the hands of the *laoi*. Agamemnon, having secured the general cooperation of the *gerontes*, bestows chiefly privilege on a previously loyal supporter, Odysseus. Achilles’ statement in *Iliad* 1

³⁶ Unruh 2011, 280-282 considers Agamemnon’s transfer of the *skeptron* to Odysseus in *Iliad* 2 as the only transfer scene. However, he only briefly accounts for Achilles’ statement that the “sons of the Achaeans hold [this *skeptron*] in their hands,” and merely mentions it to dismiss Hans van Wees’ argument that all *basileis* have their own *skeptron*.

not only imbues the *laoi* with judgemental authority to challenge Agamemnon, but it also illustrates a distinction between a *basileus*' personal claim to authority and the actual symbolic value inherent in the *skeptron*.

However much power is vested in the holding of the *skeptron*, it is not a chief's sole source of authority, but rather a supplemental tool in the duty of ruling. The *skeptron*'s limitations are no different than those of the *basileus*. As he is subject to the judgement of the *laoi*, the authority of the *skeptron* is merely "the product of subjective acts of recognition and, in so far as it is credit and credibility, exists only in and through representation, in and through trust, belief, and obedience."³⁷ The subjectivity of recognition lies in the *basileus*'s claim to *themis*; the *basileus* may command obedience only as much as his subjects have a similar sense of custom, justice, and right. In *Iliad* 2, Agamemnon is faced with the prospect that his subordinates will not recognize his claim to *themis* based on the criticisms leveled by Achilles in *Iliad* 1.

Diomedes' response to Agamemnon's invective in *Iliad* 9 supports this notion of the deeply subjective nature of the *skeptron* as a function of the bearer's personal qualities as a leader. Indeed, he proceeds to question and deconstruct the power of the *skeptron* by separating chiefly authority from physical might:

σοὶ δὲ διάνδιχα δῶκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω:
σκήπτρῳ μὲν τοι δῶκε τετιμῆσθαι περὶ πάντων,

³⁷ Bourdieu 1991, 192.

ἀλκὴν δ' οὐ τοι δῶκεν, ὅ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον

But as for you, the son of crooked-counseling Cronos
has given you a double endowment: with the scepter
he has granted you to be honored above all,
but valor he gave you not, which is the greatest strength (*Il.* 9.37-39).

The term διάνδιχα is particularly illustrative of the potential divide between the *skeptron*'s power and practical, physical prowess. Here, Diomedes is not saying that Zeus has endowed Agamemnon with a twofold gift (διάνδιχα), but rather that the god has only bestowed on him *one half* of the requisite qualities of leadership. That is, Agamemnon only has a tenuous right to be honored (τετιμῆσθαι περὶ πάντων). Agamemnon does have the ability to dole out *themis* using the *skeptron*³⁸, but Diomedes' distinction between merely being honored (τετιμῆσθαι) because of the *skeptron*'s authority and being able to *earn* that honor through prowess or strength (ἀλκὴν) illustrates that a group or individual's 'subjective acts of recognition' play an important role in the *basileus*' ability to maintain power. Agamemnon, conscious of his damaged reputation, must rely on an individual during the test whose personal qualities as a leader are sufficiently recognized by the *laoi* to succeed.

In addition to chiefly power's subjectivity and dependance on popular recognition of inherent personal qualities that are only supplemented by the *skeptron*, the fluidity of chiefly power also suggests the possibility of transferring that power to an individual *with*

³⁸ See also *Iliad* 9.154-156 for the *skeptron*'s utility in doling out *themistas*: ἐν δ' ἄνδρες ναίουσι πολύρρηγες πολυβοῦται, / οἳ κέ ἐ δωτίνησι θεὸν ὥς τιμήσουσι / καὶ οἱ ὑπὸ σκήπτρῳ λιπαρὰς τελέουσι θέμιστας.

the requisite qualities, as Achilles does in *Iliad* 1. Achilles' assertion that the υἱες Ἀχαιῶν hold the *skeptron* in their hands (*Il.* 1.238) is suggestive of the fluid transmission of chiefly power that the genealogy illustrates and practice in the *Iliad* has shown that quick shifts in fluid authority necessitate the choosing of a delegate or partisan to represent one's interests. The *skeptron* would not, then, serve as a symbol of any fixed office, but a more fluid symbol itself that serves to bolster the authority of an accomplished wielder whose judgment and reputation are sound and publicly recognized. In *Iliad* 2, this accomplished, yet temporary wielder is Odysseus.

To address the second claim, that the passage serves as a narrative foreshadowing device, Agamemnon's interaction with Odysseus during the test reveals that Agamemnon actively and deliberately bestows chiefly authority in the form of the *skeptron* on Odysseus, just as Achilles does in *Iliad* 1 for the *laoi*. During the chaos following Agamemnon's test, Odysseus "receives" the *skeptron* from Agamemnon:

αὐτὸς δ' Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονος ἀντίος ἔλθων
δέξατό οἱ σκῆπτρον πατρῷον ἄφθιτον αἰεὶ

But he himself went straight to Agamemnon, son of Atreus,
and received from him the paternal scepter, imperishable ever (*Il.* 2.185-186).

The LSJ entry for δέχομαι³⁹ offers a specific translation for this phrase in the *Iliad* with the dative οἱ: "to receive something at the hand of another." In addition to this use of

³⁹ LSJ A.I.

δέχομαι as “receiving” with the implied permission of the dative agent οἱ, the poet’s qualification that Odysseus came to Agamemnon ἀντίος implies a direct line of face-to-face communication.⁴⁰ This use of ἀντίος is paralleled at *Iliad* 1.535, when the Olympian gods rise to greet Zeus (ἀλλ’ ἀντίοι ἔσταν ἅπαντες) and is attributed to Agamemnon himself at *Iliad* 6.54 when he runs to castigate Menelaus (ἀντίος ἦλθε θεῶν, καὶ ὁμοκλήσας ἔπος ἠΐδα). In other words, Odysseus did not *take* the *skeptron* in an adversarial sense; Agamemnon *gave* to Odysseus the *skeptron* intentionally in a face-to-face encounter.

Odysseus is Agamemnon’s logical choice of delegate to act in his stead during the test. Not only does Odysseus demonstrate loyalty in *Iliad* 1 by bringing Chryseis back to Chryse⁴¹ on Agamemnon’s orders when others like Talthibius and Eurybates were conspicuously unwilling, but he notably hesitates and feels grief at the sight of the army fleeing:

εὗρεν ἔπειτ’ Ὀδυσῆα Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντον
 ἑσταότ’ οὐδ’ ὅ γε νηὸς εὐσσέλμοιο μελαίνης
 ἄπτετ’, ἐπεὶ μιν ἄχος κραδίην καὶ θυμὸν ἴκανε

Then she found Odysseus, the peer of Zeus in counsel, standing still.
 He was not laying hold of his benched black ship,
 since grief had come on his heart and spirit (*Il.* 2.169-171)

⁴⁰ LSJ ἀντίος A.I. Also see *Il.* 1.535; 6.54.

⁴¹ *Il.* 1.308-311; 1.430-431.

Odysseus does not flee or panic during the *laoi*'s flight (notably prompted by Agamemnon⁴²), but stands by (ἑσταότ') and instead of immediately taking action, is stricken with grief (ἄχος). This is a difficult passage that does not reveal the actions of the other *gerontes*, but whether we understand Odysseus' reaction as representative of the other *gerontes*' grief at watching their social fabric dissolve (again, at Agamemnon's behest) or exclusive to Odysseus himself is of little importance. The point of this scene, before Odysseus receives Agamemnon's *skeptron*, is that he does not fall for Agamemnon's call to abandon Troy, and that an unqualified grief doesn't necessarily prevent him from doing so, but merely strikes him as the chaotic flight occurs around him. Odysseus knows not to lay hands on his black ship (οὐδ' ὅ γε νηὸς εὖσσελμοιο μελαίνης / ἄπτει') because he explicitly tells the *gerontes* in the *boule* that he will rely on the *gerontes* to restrain the *laoi* after calling for flight: καὶ φεύγειν σὺν νηυσὶ πολυκλήϊσι κελεύσω: / ὑμεῖς δ' ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος ἐρητύειν ἐπέεσσιν.⁴³ It is not only ἄχος that restrains Odysseus, but *prior knowledge* of at least part of Agamemnon's plan. In the next section, I will show that the source of Odysseus' ἄχος is the realization that Agamemnon deliberately misleads the *gerontes* by feigning concern for social cohesion, while fully intending to cause the chaos that necessitates Odysseus' radical intervention and reception of the *skeptron*.

⁴² φεύγωμεν σὺν νηυσὶ φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν (*Il.* 2.140)

⁴³ *Il.* 2.74-75.

Chapter 4: Narrative Section 2

The ἄχος Odysseus feels before he takes the *skeptron* is not only because he witnesses Agamemnon incite total anarchy, but also because he realizes that Agamemnon intentionally put the *gerontes* into a dire situation without their knowledge. In this section, I will examine Agamemnon's speech to the *gerontes*, and how he relies on the language of elite recognition to appeal to their desire for social cohesion. However, Agamemnon disguises his true intention to capitalize on the low morale of the army, thereby causing a more chaotic flight than the *gerontes* expected (as well as the onset of Odysseus' ἄχος at the unexpected situation). Agamemnon's plan is twofold: though ultimately, he will exacerbate the *laoi*'s impulse towards abandoning Agamemnon. First, though, he must ostensibly conform to the chiefly duties Dream Nestor lays out, and by superficially demonstrating his fitness for rule to the *gerontes*, ensures that they will make a public commitment of loyalty to the *laoi*. In other words, by ensuring the cooperation of the *gerontes*, Agamemnon ensures that they will speak positively about him to the incited mob of *laoi* during the test. By first implying to the *gerontes* that he will conduct a test in the interest of communal cohesion and then by doing the exact opposite by appealing to the *laoi*'s desperate desire to return home, we can properly classify Agamemnon's tactics in *Iliad* 2 to ensure the *gerontes*' public commitment of loyalty as deception.

Although Agamemnon couches his actions in the guise of proper chiefly activity, he is already actively seeking to deceive the *gerontes*, because he explains only one portion of his *pukinen boulen* (*Il.* 2.55) to them:

ἀλλ' ἄγετ' αἶ κέν πως θωρήξομεν υἱας Ἀχαιῶν:
πρῶτα δ' ἐγὼν ἔπεσιν πειρήσομαι, ἣ θέμις ἐστί,
καὶ φεύγειν σὺν νηυσὶ πολυκλήϊσι κελεύσω:
ὕμεις δ' ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος ἐρητύειν ἐπέεσσιν.

But come, let us see if somehow we can arm the sons of the Achaeans;
but first I will make trial of them with words, as is customary, and tell
them to flee with their benched ships, and you, one here,
one there, try to restrain them with words. (*Il.* 2.72-75)

Agamemnon is clearly anticipating a full-scale flight of the army to the ships, given that he explicitly says that he will order the army to flee (φεύγειν... κελεύσω). His plan is not merely to attempt to arm the *laoi*, but rather to have his *gerontes* individually (ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος) restrain the contingents. On the surface, Agamemnon is behaving in a proper chiefly manner, as Dream Nestor advised: he is both including the *gerontes* in the decision-making process and taking the *laoi* into consideration. However, his plan has another purpose: by taking the collective focus off himself and allowing the *gerontes* to eventually encourage obedience to Agamemnon on the grounds that he is behaving in a proper chiefly manner, he can indirectly assert his dominance through the *gerontes* who haven't suffered from a damaged reputation. Ultimately Agamemnon leaves out his intent, which is to oblige the *gerontes* to a public commitment of loyalty to his

leadership, evident in his intentional bestowal of the *skeptron*, and thus his chiefly authority, on Odysseus. Agamemnon merely implies that he will test them with words, but neglects to mention that these words will sow chaos among the ranks, and that Agamemnon will create a situation that *forces* the *gerontes* to appeal to his performance of chiefly duty.

Part of Agamemnon's plan is to rely on his ability to use authoritative acts that have just been discredited in *Iliad* 1, but he uses vastly different techniques to express this authority among the *gerontes* and *laoi*. Agamemnon plans to assert his authority among the *laoi* with a direct command (κελεύσω)⁴⁴, while he appeals to his chiefly *themis* among the *gerontes*. Although he will command the *laoi*, to which the *laoi* would not respond positively if he merely demands obedience, Agamemnon's test hinges on his appeal to the *laoi*'s desperation, and therefore succeeds in getting them to follow his command.⁴⁵ Such an appeal guarantees success that does not require him to ask unwilling obedience, but commands them to follow in Achilles' footsteps, which they are primed to do. To the *gerontes*, though, Agamemnon is advocating for a tactic of reverse psychology, which the *gerontes* do not know will be taken at face value by the *laoi*. The

⁴⁴ Knox and Russo 1989, 352 suggest that we should translate this word as "urge" or "bid" with an emphasis on persuasion.

⁴⁵ Cook 2003: "In a single stroke Agamemnon rouses the army's sense of betrayal by the gods, their frustration and despondency over the war effort...and anxiety over the state of their households, in particular, their wives and children" (169). Thalmann 1988, 8 concedes that Agamemnon is using a "complex message" of reverse psychology on the *laoi*, but argues that the *laoi*, contrary to Agamemnon's expectation, took the call to flee at face value. This is plainly false: we have seen that Agamemnon clearly anticipates the *laoi*'s full-scale flight, indicating that it was a part of his plan from the beginning.

boule of *gerontes*, then, is Agamemnon's method for ensuring that the elites will agree to engage in the communal action of arming the men by ostensibly performing his own duties as *basileus*. However, Agamemnon plans to cause a situation in which the *gerontes* are forced to take a positive stance on Agamemnon's centralized leadership in the face of absolute chaos, thereby subordinating both groups to his authority out of dire necessity. It is only by virtue of his reliance on the *gerontes* interest in communal solidarity⁴⁶ that he is able to carry out his plan, an interest he performs to the liking of the *gerontes*, but works ultimately in service of his own personal interests. A *pukinen boule* indeed: Agamemnon commands obedience by planning secretly to suggest a course of action that already appeals to the *laoi*. In the process, Agamemnon regains his authority by having all the *gerontes* (especially Odysseus) publically advocate for his sole rulership after they are misled by his display of proper chiefly activity that the Dream Nestor dictated. In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon relies on reverse psychology by playing on the insecurities of the people to produce his desired result. This would not be the only time that Agamemnon uses reverse psychology to rouse soldiers to a particular course of action, and it proves to be an effective technique for eliciting the behavior that Agamemnon needs in a given situation. In *Iliad* 4, Agamemnon chides Odysseus and his men for standing apart and cowering (Il. 4.340) when the poet clearly describes their battle line as not yet having heard the war cry (Il. 4.331). Agamemnon's tactic works, and his words

⁴⁶ See Donlan 1998, 68n17.

rouse Odysseus to battle (Il. 4.350-355). In the case of *Iliad* 4, Agamemnon knows that Odysseus is similarly minded for battle (Il. 4.360-361), but urges him on by challenging his battle prowess (Il. 4.351-352). Agamemnon's use of reverse psychology in *Iliad* 4 is comparatively more straightforward than in *Iliad* 2; he manages to rouse Odysseus to quick action by calling into question his bravery. In the case of *Iliad* 2, Agamemnon presents a tactic of reverse psychology to the *gerontes*, but in fact ends up presenting the only course of action to the *laoi* that appeals to them: flight and abandonment. As I noted in the discussion of the *boule* of *gerontes*, Agamemnon intentionally leaves out his intent to sow chaos by suggesting a course of action that will overwhelmingly appeal to the uncooperative *laoi*. His speech in the *agore* among the *laoi* plays directly into their insecurities concerning failure in the war⁴⁷ and the pathetic vision of their time spent away from their homes and families.⁴⁸ Agamemnon thus capitalizes on their predispositions to return home, which Odysseus must remedy by recalling that Calchas has prophesied success⁴⁹ which is confirmed by Nestor⁵⁰. Odysseus then makes a public display of confidence in Agamemnon to carry the success out.⁵¹ Agamemnon deliberately suggests a course of action to the *laoi* that the *gerontes* will be obliged to remedy on Agamemnon's own terms. By deliberately exacerbating the potential for social

⁴⁷ Il. 2.119-122.

⁴⁸ Il. 2.134-138.

⁴⁹ Il. 2.331-332.

⁵⁰ Il. 2.350-353.

⁵¹ Il. 2.360-361.

dissolution in the army through “reverse psychology”, Agamemnon will rouse the *basileis* to necessary action in order to preserve the *basileis*’ own authority over their own people, which in turn reaffirms Agamemnon’s position as the centralized authority over both *basileis* and *laoi*.

While Agamemnon plans to rely on a direct command among the *laoi* (κελεύσω) and gambles on the *laoi* taking his “reverse psychology” plan at face value, his more subtle technique of asserting dominance over the *gerontes* is dependent on the relationship between the terms *πειράω* and *themis*. In other words, by putting on a facade of performing proper chiefly duties, Agamemnon ensures the *gerontes*’ commitment to the test by obliquely appealing to his status and chiefly privilege to propose such a course of action. With regard to Agamemnon’s appeal to *themis*, Kirk 1985 argues that the appeal is “designed to counter any feeling of surprise or sense of the unusual by the council members” regarding the test itself, and not directly related to Agamemnon’s concern for his chiefly authority.⁵² However, these two concepts, the normalization of an abnormal course of action and a direct appeal to chiefly privilege, are intimately intertwined. Agamemnon, aware of his tenuously thin claim to chiefly privilege among the *laoi*, betrays the fact that he is attempting to assert a similar dominance over the *gerontes* through the combination of *πειράω* and an appeal to *themis*, but in a much more subtle way than he does with Achilles in *Iliad* 1. There are not many instances of this sort

⁵² Kirk 1985, 122n73-5.

of appeal to civic privilege (*themis*) and the act of testing (πειράω) in the Homeric poems, but the few instances that do appear illustrate that Agamemnon is using a specific rhetorical technique to appeal to his chiefly authority in a very subtle and almost unrecognizable way, which is an important precaution after his more aggressive approach with Achilles failed. Kirk rightly observes that this test is not a usual way to rally the troops, and that the only analogous “testing” scene in Homer occurs in *Odyssey* 24, in which Odysseus tests his father, Laertes⁵³:

αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ πατρὸς πειρήσομαι ἡμετέροιο,
αἴ κέ μ' ἐπιγνώῃ καὶ φράσσεται ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,
ἦέ κεν ἀγνοίῃσι, πολὺν χρόνον ἀμφὶς ἔοντα.

But I will make trial of my father, and see whether
he will recognize me and know me by sight
or whether he will fail to know me,
since I have been gone for so long. (*Od.* 24.216-218)

Both Agamemnon and Odysseus use the same term, πειρήσομαι, to describe their test.

There is an undeniable parallel in the use of the term, but its meaning in context with other forms of πειράω with the dative, as we see in *Iliad* 2.73, and not the usual genitive⁵⁴, indicates that there are different types of “testing” being done. Odysseus plans to make a trial *of* his father (πατρὸς πειρήσομαι ἡμετέροιο), while Agamemnon specifies no genitive object, but rather qualifies his testing as making a trial “with words”

⁵³ Knox and Russo 1989, 352 dismiss this connection that Kirk makes as “of no use”.

⁵⁴ LSJ B.II.

(ἔπεισιν πειρήσομαι). Similarly, in the *Odyssey*, Telemachus utters a phrase using πειράω with a dative in response to Athena's bidding him to address Nestor in Pylos:

τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἦῤδα:
‘Μέντορ, πῶς τ' ἄρ' ἴω; πῶς τ' ἄρ' προσπύξομαι αὐτόν;
οὐδέ τί πω μύθοισι πεπείρημαι πυκινοῖσιν:
αἰδῶς δ' αὖ νέον ἄνδρα γεραίτερον ἐξερέεσθαι.

Then wise Telemachus answered her:
Mentor, how shall I go, and how shall I greet him?
I have not, as yet, made trial with subtle speech
and moreover, a young man has shame to question an elder (*Od.* 3.21-24)

Telemachus uses the perfect middle passive form of πειράω (πεπείρημαι), but πειράω is often formed in the middle with an active sense⁵⁵. We can read Telemachus' statement as “I have not yet made trial with clever words (μύθοισι πυκινοῖσιν).” This use of πειράω is not making a trial *of* someone, as in *Odyssey* 24.216, but an attempt to rely on rhetorical ability and social status to gain *information*, just as Agamemnon seeks to gain *obedience* in *Iliad* 2 through his “test with words.” In *Odyssey* 3, Telemachus both speaks of not having the requisite experience in ‘testing with clever words’ as a persuasive technique⁵⁶, but also joins this term for making trial with a judgement of his status: αἰδῶς δ' αὖ νέον ἄνδρα γεραίτερον ἐξερέεσθαι. In pointing out the age discrepancy and the *aidos* that should accompany such a thought, Telemachus is making not only a judgement

⁵⁵ LSJ B.

⁵⁶ Telemachus is on his information-gathering mission in *Odyssey* 3, and Athena instructs him to interrogate Nestor, which is the source of Telemachus' lack of self-confidence: λίσσεσθαι δέ μιν αὐτός, ὅπως νημερτέα εἴπῃ: / ψεῦδος δ' οὐκ ἐρέει: μάλα γὰρ πεπνυμένος ἐστί (*Od.* 3.19-20).

about his ability to speak within the given social order, but also about the social order itself. Agamemnon is making the same connection between his right to perform a test with his social standing in *Iliad* 2 by appealing to his *themis*.⁵⁷ He is making a statement (notably to his elite peers) about his place in the social hierarchy, which constitutes a much more subtle assertion of his authority than in *Iliad* 1. Agamemnon will conduct this unorthodox method of testing, and reminds his *gerontes*, by appealing to *themis*, why he has the right to do this, while acknowledging that he must rely on them to uphold the social order.⁵⁸ These appeals succeed because Agamemnon does not explicitly demand the *gerontes*' obedience, but constructs a particular presentation of himself that is deeply entrenched in Homeric social norms. In both *Odyssey* 3 and *Iliad* 2, these norms are revealed by taking into account the age and social privileges afforded to Telemachus and Agamemnon. Telemachus admits his inexperience and articulates his social position in terms of the respect (αἰδῶς) he has to show as a young man (νέον) speaking to an older man (γεραιότερον). While Telemachus is acting in a situation that demands deference to age and experience, Agamemnon is acting in a situation in which an appeal to *themis* will differentiate his position in terms of chiefly power. Agamemnon correctly understands

⁵⁷ As he does at *Iliad* 2.73.

⁵⁸ Achilles challenges Agamemnon at *Iliad* 1.302 to “make an attempt” to lay hands on his property at the end of the *neikos* and threatens him with violence if he should do so (*Il.* 1.303). This challenge to “make an attempt” is connected with the relative status of the two men, given that the context of this challenge is in a quarrel about the status conferred by prestige goods. Achilles is thus challenging Agamemnon to “make an attempt” based on his self-professed status as a better warrior.

that *themis* is a guiding principle for humanity⁵⁹, and one which widens the scope of his authority across the army. Agamemnon's speech is couched in very specific and specialized rhetoric that reflects a consciousness of his status and a particular method of persuasion in the use of the verb *πειράω*. This rhetorical ploy allows Agamemnon to disguise his intent, complete subordination, in culturally acceptable terms to ensure the *gerontes*' cooperation.

The *boule* of *Iliad* 2 not only lays out the parameters (reconstitution of social order) and actors (*gerontes*) in the test, but also demonstrates how Agamemnon can manipulate the conventions of collective decision-making in order to secure obedience among the *gerontes* in much more subtle ways than he did in *Iliad* 1. The assembly of *Iliad* 1 devolves completely into Achilles' rebellion, and its failure is marked by insults and invective focused on the failure of the chief-as-economic arbiter. In contrast, the *boule* of *Iliad* 2 is distinguished by its efficiency and marked language of elite recognition, indicating that Agamemnon is actively presenting himself as conforming to proper chiefly behavior in the interest of securing the *gerontes*' cooperation. As opposed to Achilles' assertion to the contrary (*Il.* 1.410-412), Agamemnon is depicted as retaining his primacy among the Achaean elite when Nestor agrees to the test. Nestor is not afraid to criticize Agamemnon's behavior, as he does at *Iliad* 1.275-276. His agreement in *Iliad* 2 with Agamemnon's plan indicates that Agamemnon has successfully depicted himself

⁵⁹ As he says at *Iliad* 9.134: ἡ θέμις ἀνθρώπων πέλει ἀνδρῶν ἡδὲ γυναικῶν.

as conforming to proper chiefly activity. Nestor describes Agamemnon as “professing to be the best of the Achaeans” (ὅς μὲν ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν εὐχεται εἶναι (*Il.* 2.82)). Nestor must clearly believe that Agamemnon professes justifiably, because he approves of Agamemnon’s course of action: to make trial of the Achaeans before actually arming them:

νῦν δ’ ἶδεν ὅς μὲν ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν εὐχεται εἶναι:
ἀλλ’ ἄγετ’ αἷ κέν πως θωρήξομεν υἷας Ἀχαιῶν.

But now he has seen it who declares himself to be the best of the Achaeans. But come, let’s see if somehow we can arm the sons of the Achaeans. (*Il.* 2.82-83)

Agamemnon’s proposal to test the Achaeans begins with the phrase “But let’s see if we might somehow arm the sons of the Achaeans” (ἀλλ’ ἄγετ’ αἷ κέν πως θωρήξομεν υἷας Ἀχαιῶν, *Il.* 2.72). Agamemnon then follows his question (πως) with a suggestion: to test the army with words (ἔπεσιν πειρήσομαι, *Il.* 2.73). Nestor ends his approval of the plan of action with the same phrase that Agamemnon uses above (ἀλλ’ ἄγετ’ αἷ κέν πως θωρήξομεν υἷας Ἀχαιῶν, *Il.* 2.83), indicating his concurrence with Agamemnon’s course of action, but importantly, not his intent for arming the Achaeans, which, as I noted, Agamemnon leaves out of his suggestion (*Il.* 2.72-75).⁶⁰ If Nestor had any sense of the chaos Agamemnon intended to cause in service of maintaining his authority, we

⁶⁰ Kirk 1985, 123n76-83: “The surprising thing is that he makes no reference to the peculiar idea of a test of morale- indeed his concluding remark at 83, which is an exact repetition of Agamemnon’s words at 72...is most appropriate to a version in which that idea was never mentioned.”

would expect a word of dissent from him. As Deborah Beck has shown⁶¹, speech quotation has the ability to “accent” or “highlight” particular directives “in order to foster specific pragmatic goals.”⁶² The pragmatic goal, in this case, is for Agamemnon to get the *gerontes* to acquiesce to his test, which necessarily subordinates them to Agamemnon in their efforts to display a public commitment of loyalty in their restraint of the *laoi*. In other words, Agamemnon needs the *gerontes* to recognize his engagement in bouletic activity as proper for a *basileus* as part of his plan to ensure their display of loyalty. If we follow Beck’s paradigm of direct quotations as a way to move bouletic activity forward, she conceives of the sources of these quotations as “comparatively uncontroversial sources of authority that lie beyond the political struggles of the camp.”⁶³ This is *far* from the case in *Iliad* 2, and it would stand to reason that Agamemnon is, in fact, the *most* controversial figure at the very center of the main political struggle in the camp. However, unlike Odysseus, who is addressing the *laoi* in the Calchas speech, Nestor is addressing the *gerontes*, the insular group of elites, whose opinion of Agamemnon is reinforced by Nestor’s authoritative approval of the plan. In quoting Agamemnon as a gesture of acquiescence, he is implicitly endorsing Agamemnon as an authoritative figure

⁶¹ In the case of Odysseus’ direct quotation of Calchas’ interpretation of the gods’ will after Agamemnon’s test.

⁶² Beck 2012, 42.

⁶³ Beck 2012, 42. See also p. 165: “Indeed, messages provide a model for invoking the authority of someone else when giving any subtype of directive, in the sense that messages are a kind of directive in which the authority of a third party is regularly not simply an augment to, but the main source of, the authority for a desired course of action.”

and must believe that Agamemnon is acting genuinely with communal cohesion as his primary interest.

Nestor's omission of an alternate plan not only speaks to his confidence in Agamemnon as an authoritative leader, but also serves as his acceptance of the plan Agamemnon offers.

Nestor's acceptance and tacit approval of Agamemnon's plan is an indication of how an effective chieftain functions; there should be a level of cooperation and deference⁶⁴

between chief and *gerontes* in order to strengthen the image of representative consensus and decision-making among the respective elites, which comprises a large part of

Odysseus' rebuke of the *laoi* in the third narrative section. The smoothly functioning

bouleutic process ultimately serves as an effective means of disguising Agamemnon's

intent to force obedience on the *gerontes* by producing a chaotic situation in an assembly that is ostensibly convened to reestablish social order.

The poet intentionally omits any indication of the other *basileis*' opinions on the matter of testing the army. To provide a contrast with the violent *neikos* of *Iliad* 1, the poet must depict the *boule* as unfolding smoothly and by modeling the army's successful decision-making process. This cooperation further indicates Agamemnon's adherence to

traditional chiefly behaviors and a narrative movement away from the disastrous *neikos* of *Iliad* 1. This narrative change builds great tension by juxtaposing the utter failure of

⁶⁴ We see this same sort of deference from Diomedes in *Iliad* 4, when he not only remains silent after Agamemnon rebukes him in battle (4.401-402), but also chides Sthenelus for quarreling with Agamemnon for rousing the army (4.411-414).

Agamemnon's chiefly power in *Iliad* 1 with a much more cooperative *boule*, which is then immediately subverted by introducing the worst case scenario: complete anarchy. However, Agamemnon has now succeeded in securing the tentative (and partially uninformed) cooperation of the *gerontes*, acting in the interest of social order, and inadvertently subordinating themselves to Agamemnon's centralized rule.

Chapter 5: Narrative Section 3

Odysseus' speech to the *gerontes* not only confirms that Agamemnon crafted a deceptive plan through the omission of his intention to force a public display of loyalty, but his very different speech to the *laoi* is filled with the language of elite recognition that encourages their recognition of Agamemnon's performance of chiefly duty. In this section, I will show that *whom* Odysseus addresses and *how* he addresses them not only reveals that Agamemnon ultimately succeeds in obliging the *gerontes* to a public commitment of loyalty and that the *skeptron* plays an integral part in reenforcing this loyalty among the *laoi*.

Odysseus' speech to the *gerontes*, whom Agamemnon mislead in terms of how severely he would capitalize on the *laoi*'s predisposition to return home, becomes a complicated piece of rhetoric designed to soften the reality of Agamemnon's tactic of subordination.

We first must identify whom among the elites Odysseus addresses in his first speech.

Cook 2003 argues that none of the *gerontes* present at the *boule* "could fail to understand that the proposition to flee" was a test of the *laoi*'s morale.⁶⁵ However, based on the evidence I have presented, it is not unreasonable to assume that the *gerontes* were unaware of the extent to which Agamemnon would appeal to the *laoi*'s desperation after

⁶⁵ Cook 2003 argues against the *gerontes*' inclusion in Odysseus' address: "As applied to those present at the counsel, this would be incorrect at the very least with regard to the one point that matters: none of those present could fail to understand that the proposition to flee was a test of the army's willingness to arm themselves and fight" (177). However, Agamemnon's deception allows (and even demands) that we include them in Odysseus' first speech.

ten years at war. In order to strengthen my argument that Odysseus is, in fact, addressing the *gerontes*, I will examine not only the types of elites Odysseus addresses, but the rhetoric Odysseus uses to mollify them during the chaos. Odysseus begins by addressing “each chief and man of note:”

ὅν τινα μὲν βασιλῆα καὶ ἔξοχον ἄνδρα κιχείη
τὸν δ’ ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσιν ἐρητύσασκε παραστάς:

Whatever chief or man of note he met, to his side he would come
and with gentle words seek to restrain him (*Il.* 2.189-190)

The poet describes the men whom Odysseus addresses as “chiefs” (βασιλῆα) and “outstanding men” (ἔξοχον ἄνδρα), which is inclusive of the *gerontes* introduced in the *boule*. It is reasonable to include the *gerontes*⁶⁶ with the *basilea kai exochon* that Odysseus addresses in 2.188. In his speech, Odysseus reminds each *basileus* or *exochos* that they were in the same *boule* as he was (2.194). It stands to reason that these *basileis* and *exochoi* include the same *gerontes* gathered in the *boule*, and that their ignorance of Agamemnon’s intent is the result of the deception and thus necessitates Odysseus’ clarification of Agamemnon’s intent. Odysseus has briefly taken on a more authoritative role among these men, having gleaned Agamemnon’s purpose *and* his *skeptron*. He restrains them with gentle words (ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσιν ἐρητύσασκε). His tactic in gently revealing Agamemnon’s intention is markedly diplomatic, and seeks to avoid causing a

⁶⁶ Also called *skeptouchoi basileis* (*Il.* 2.86)

similar quarrel that erupted in *Iliad* 1. Furthermore, Odysseus ends up doing what Agamemnon tells the *gerontes* to do in the *boule* (ὕμεῖς δ' ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος ἐρητύειν ἐπέεσσιν [*Il.* 1.2.75]), but with a slight modification: he uses *gentle* words. Odysseus' adoption of Agamemnon's command, directed at the *basileis* with a slight modification, implies that it was not simply the *laoi* whom the *basileis* needed to restrain, but that the *basileis* themselves are restrained in a manner that was initially proposed for the *laoi*. This is not the first time Odysseus uses specific rhetoric to subordinate any one of the *gerontes* to Agamemnon. By looking at the embassy of *Iliad* 9, we see that Odysseus uses similar tactics to oblige a specific *geron*, Achilles, 'to a public display of loyalty.' Although Agamemnon offers a wide array of gifts and prizes to Achilles, he does so under the stipulation that Achilles recognize that Agamemnon is "chieflier:"

δηθήτω: Αἴδης τοι ἀμείλιχος ἢ δ' ἀδάμαστος,
 τοῦνεκα καὶ τε βροτοῖσι θεῶν ἔχθιστος ἀπάντων:
 καὶ μοι ὑποστήτω ὅσσον βασιλεύτερός εἰμι
 ἢ δ' ὅσσον γενεῇ προγενέστερος εὖχομαι εἶναι.

Let him yield- Hades, to be sure, is ungentle and unyielding,
 and for that reason he is most hated by mortals of all the gods:
 and let him submit himself to me, since I am more chiefly,
 and claim to be so much his elder (*Il.* 9.158-161)

Agamemnon's final statement before the embassy is certainly the last thing that Achilles would want to hear. Far from the displays of elite recognition and respect that Agamemnon shows in *Iliad* 2, Agamemnon clearly wants Achilles' submission

(δημηθήτω). Agamemnon employs comparatives (προγενέστερος), particularly the adjective βασιλεύτερός, that clearly express his superiority. Agamemnon clearly expresses the motive for sending the gifts to Achilles. These are not gentle words, and Odysseus knows this. It is this implied knowledge of what will be contextually acceptable to the sensibilities of a fellow *geron* and subsequent rhetorical modification that we also see occurring in *Iliad* 2. Odysseus modulates the content of his address to disguise the ultimate goal of keeping Agamemnon in power, which is the reverse of the situation in *Iliad* 2, in which he must reveal Agamemnon's intent. Odysseus uses this inverse tactic in *Iliad* 9, completely omitting Agamemnon's motives, as quoted above:

Odysseus:

ἐν δ' ἄνδρες ναίουσι πολύρρηνες πολυβοῦται,
οἳ κέ σε δωτίνῃσι θεὸν ὥς τιμήσουσι
καί τοι ὑπὸ σκήπτρῳ λιπαρὰς τελέουσι θέμιστας.
ταῦτά κέ τοι τελέσειε μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο.
εἰ δέ τοι Ἀτρεΐδης μὲν ἀπήχθετο κηρόθι μᾶλλον
αὐτὸς καὶ τοῦ δῶρα, σὺ δ' ἄλλους περ Παναχαιοὺς
τειρομένους ἐλέαιρε κατὰ στρατόν, οἳ σε θεὸν ὥς
τίσουσ'·

In them [borders of Pylos] dwell men rich in flocks and cattle,
men who will honor you with gifts as though you were a god,
and beneath your scepter will bring your ordinances to rich fulfillment.
All this he will bring to pass for you, if you cease from your wrath.
But if the son of Atreus is too utterly hated by you at heart,
himself and his gifts, do have pity on the rest of the Achaeans,
who are being worn down throughout the army and will honor
you like a god (*Il.* 9.296-303)

Agamemnon:

ἐν δ' ἄνδρες ναίουσι πολύρρηνες πολυβοῦται,
οἳ κέ ἐ δωτίνησι θεὸν ὥς τιμήσουσι
καὶ οἱ ὑπὸ σκήπτρῳ λιπαρὰς τελέουσι θέμιστας.
ταῦτά κέ οἱ τελέσαιμι μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο.

In them [borders of Pylos] dwell men rich in flocks and cattle,
men who will honor him with gifts as though he were a god,
and beneath his scepter will bring his ordinances to rich fulfillment.(Il. 9.154-157)

After the final matching line of both speeches (ταῦτά κέ τοι τελέσειε μεταλήξαντι χόλοιο), Odysseus wisely omits lines 158-161 as used by Agamemnon, replacing them with a much gentler request: to take pity on the Achaeans (ἐλέαιρε), while acknowledging that Achilles may still be angry with Agamemnon (εἰ δέ τοι Ἀτρεΐδης μὲν ἀπήχθετο κηρόθι μᾶλλον). This is the same tactic we see Odysseus employing as he uses “gentle words” to explain Agamemnon’s true intent to the *gerontes*. Paired with a gentler request, Odysseus’ version of the offer includes the very same elements of elite recognition and identity that figure so prominently in *Iliad* 2: the *skeptron* and entitlement to dole out *themis* (καὶ τοι ὑπὸ σκήπτρῳ λιπαρὰς τελέουσι θέμιστας). However, Agamemnon is offering these symbols and privileges under the condition of subordination. Odysseus wisely omits Agamemnon’s condition, but in doing so, only leaves the bare offer of chiefly authority, promised in the *skeptron* and *themis*, which Achilles ultimately recognizes as a gift attack. Achilles implies that he sees through Odysseus’ omission, understanding what the purpose of even Odysseus’ more softly worded entreaty implies:

ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Αἴδαιο πύλῃσιν
ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἶπῃ.

For hateful in my eyes as the gates of Hades is that man
who hides one thing in his mind and says another (*Il.* 9.312-313)

Achilles makes a clear distinction between intent (κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσίν) and what is actually said (ἄλλο δὲ εἶπῃ). This is the very same distinction that characterizes Agamemnon's deception in the *boule* and Odysseus' subsequent revelation of Agamemnon's intent. It is almost as if Odysseus' experience in *Iliad* 2, being tricked by Agamemnon's distinction between word and intent, informs the embassy to Achilles in *Iliad* 9 in which Odysseus obfuscates Agamemnon's intentions. If we take into account that Odysseus is omitting Agamemnon's potentially infuriating assertion that he is more chiefly than Achilles, this juxtaposition is squarely aimed at Odysseus, who actively attempts to conceal the true intention behind Agamemnon's offer: subordination⁶⁷. The failure of Odysseus' appeal to Achilles is due in part to his omission of a *motive* for Agamemnon to offer such privileges, which would ultimately serve to keep Agamemnon in a central position of authority. In both *Iliad* 2 and 9, Odysseus is tasked with the modification of Agamemnon's words to either reveal or conceal his motives where it is appropriate to do so. However, unlike in *Iliad* 9, Odysseus succeeds in *Iliad* 2.

⁶⁷ See Wilson 1999, 145: "Odysseus' violence is not overt, but symbolic, couched in the language of conventional relationships and heroic values. His dissembling speech, however, is doomed to fail; not only does he insufficiently mask Agamemnon's ἄποινα, but he offers no recompense, ποινή, for the loss of τιμή Achilles has incurred." Mazur 2010, 5n10 entertains the possibility that Achilles is also directly referring to Agamemnon in these lines.

Odysseus acts loyally on behalf of Agamemnon in both *Iliad* 2 and 9, which makes his modifications in content, the use of gentler words than Agamemnon might use, specifically designed to ensure that Agamemnon retains the highest level of power without generating enmity. Part of this gentler, more diplomatic way of affirming Agamemnon's status as chief is also to acknowledge any objections that the *basileis* addressed might have to the implications of Odysseus' speeches. In the embassy to Achilles in *Iliad* 9, Odysseus recognizes Achilles' anger in lieu of simply appealing to Agamemnon's more kingly status: εἰ δέ τοι Ἀτρεΐδης μὲν ἀπήχθετο κηρόθι μάλλον (*Il.* 9.300). Odysseus uses a similar conditional formulation in acknowledging to the *gerontes* in *Iliad* 2 that his act of restraining them (ἐρητύσασκε) might be seen as an affront to their character: 'δαιμόνι' οὐ σε ἔοικε κακὸν ὥς δειδίσσεσθαι (*Il.* 2.101). In *Iliad* 2 and 9, Odysseus directly refers to the commands laid down by Agamemnon, but modifies the contents of the speeches to mollify the feelings and egos of the *basileis* he is addressing. Similarly, *Iliad* 4 also depicts Agamemnon as having to rely on a similar tactic of using gentler words in order to broker cooperation from Odysseus after questioning his capacity as a warrior⁶⁸:

τὸν δ' ἐπιδείξας προσέφη κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
ὥς γινῶ χωόμενοιο: πάλιν δ' ὃ γε λάζετο μῦθον:

Then lord Agamemnon spoke to him with a smile,

⁶⁸ This is our instance of reverse psychology identified above.

when he saw that he was angry, and took back his words (*Il.* 4.356-357)

As Agamemnon performs his chiefly duty by ranging throughout the army in a managerial role (ὥς ὃ γε κοιρανέων ἐπεπωλείτο στίχας ἀνδρῶν [*Il.* 4.250]), he must make modifications to his rhetorical ploy of reverse psychology in order to preserve and foster Odysseus' cooperation. He validates Odysseus' anger (ὥς γνῶ χωομένοιο) and takes back his word (λάζετο μῦθον); an unthinkable task for the Agamemnon of *Iliad* 1, but a critical tactic of diplomatic rhetoric that Odysseus uses in *Iliad* 2. Odysseus' "gentle words" in his address to the *basileis* in *Iliad* 2 function to avoid a potentially objectionable affront to the *basileis*' authority and character⁶⁹. Relying on these examples from *Iliad* 4 and 9, we can see that Odysseus is using a very specific rhetorical technique in his address to the *gerontes* in *Iliad* 2. Odysseus first recognizes and avoids the possibility of offense, and then proceeds to present the true intention in a way that highlights his loyalty to Agamemnon.

While Odysseus' goal in *Iliad* 9, to subordinate Achilles to Agamemnon and motivate him to fight again, is not achieved, his goal in *Iliad* 2, to keep Agamemnon in power in Achilles' absence, is achieved through the exact same juxtaposition of intent and speech we saw working in *Iliad* 9, albeit in reverse. Donna Wilson dissects the processes by which Odysseus' dissembling in the *Iliad* 9 embassy works to keep Agamemnon in

⁶⁹ See Wilson 1999, 145 for Odysseus' near-disguise of Agamemnon's "culturally objectionable offer," the *time*-driven gift attack.

power: “Odysseus’ speech neatly reverses the import of the speech it replaces, and moreover, eliminates Agamemnon from the picture. His speech is no less a machination in Agamemnon’s project...”⁷⁰ Odysseus certainly does not *completely* remove Agamemnon from either speech to the respective *gerontes* (Ἀτρεΐδης, *Il.* 9.300; Ἀτρεΐωνος, *Il.* 2.192), but does entirely remove Agamemnon’s motive from his speech in *Iliad* 9. While Odysseus deemed it prudent to conceal Agamemnon’s motive in *Iliad* 9, he must be more transparent than Agamemnon was in *Iliad* 2 by specifically articulating Agamemnon’s intent:

‘δαιμόνι’ οὐ σε ἔοικε κακὸν ὥς δειδίσσεσθαι,
 ἀλλ’ αὐτὸς τε κάθησο καὶ ἄλλους ἴδρνε λαοῦς:
 οὐ γάρ πω σάφα οἶσθ’ οἷος νόος Ἀτρεΐωνος:
 νῦν μὲν πειρᾶται, τάχα δ’ ἔψεται υἷας Ἀχαιῶν.

It’s not right, man, to try to frighten you as if you were a coward,
 but sit yourself down and make the rest of your men sit.
 For you do not yet know clearly what is the son of Atreus’ intent:
 now he is making trial, but soon he will strike the sons of the Achaeans (*Il.* 2.191-194)

After softening his command by acknowledging that the *gerontes* are not fearful cowards (κακὸν ὥς δειδίσσεσθαι), Odysseus directly appeals to Agamemnon’s motive: νόος Ἀτρεΐωνος. This term νόος can mean generally “mind,” but in this context refers to the “purpose” or “design” inherent in Agamemnon’s *pukine boule*⁷¹. Odysseus’ modifications

⁷⁰ Wilson 1999, 145.

⁷¹ See Leshner 1981, 11: “...in a very large number of cases, *noein* and *gignoskein* are a matter of perceptual recognition and realization, i.e. becoming aware of the true identity or nature of the object (or person) one perceives, or the true meaning of the situation one has encountered.” Sullivan 1990, 69 also supports the

to Agamemnon's speech articulate a tension between plan or intention, and what is actually said: ἐν βουλῇ δ' οὐ πάντες ἀκούσαμεν οἶον ἔειπε (*Il.* 2.194). This is not only a clear indication that Odysseus is speaking to the *gerontes* introduced in the *boule*, but conveys a clear division between Agamemnon's intent (νόος) and what he actually said (οἶον ἔειπε), which is the same rhetorical technique Achilles criticizes at *Iliad* 9.312-313. While in *Iliad* 9, Odysseus completely glosses over Agamemnon's intentions (to subordinate Achilles to him), Odysseus must expound upon what little Agamemnon actually said in the *boule* with his ultimate intent. Agamemnon's intent, in Odysseus' words, is to generally make trial (νῦν μὲν πειρᾶται), and in the case of failure, to "press hard the Achaeans" (τάχα δ' ὑψεται υἷας Ἀχαιῶν). The term ἵπτομαι is illustrative of the supreme power that Odysseus insists that Agamemnon holds: this term is used in the *Iliad* as a term to describe a god's oppression of the Achaean people⁷². Odysseus is not merely giving a light warning to the *basileis*: he is also directly implying the supremacy and privilege due to the unquestioned leader. As opposed to the more diplomatic appeal in *Iliad* 9, Odysseus must threaten that Agamemnon will punish, in no uncertain terms, a failure, as is his privilege and right as the chief of the Achaean army.

Odysseus' direct appeal to the language of elite recognition in his rebuke of the *laoi* stands in stark contrast to the more indirect rhetoric of subordination he uses with the

underlying meaning of *noos* as the act of discerning the reality of a situation: "νόος is associated very often with intellectual activity. This activity serves frequently to involve a form of inner vision in which νόος "sees" the meaning or significance of some situation."

⁷² *Il.* 1.454; 16.237.

basileis. While Odysseus presents Agamemnon's intent (νόος Ἀτρεΐωνος) with gentle words to the *basileis*, he takes a more aggressive tone with the *laoi*, to whom he expresses in clear terms the necessity of centralized rule, and specifically, but in more direct terms, Agamemnon's position as chief. Odysseus' direct confrontation with members of the *laoi* indicates a radical shift in how he is expressing loyalty to Agamemnon's leadership:

ὄν δ' αὖ δῆμον τ' ἄνδρα ἴδοι βοόωντά τ' ἐφεύροι,
τὸν σκήπτρῳ ἐλάσασκεν ὁμοκλήσασκέ τε μύθῳ:

But whatever man of the people he saw, and found brawling,
he would drive him on with his scepter, and rebuke with words (*Il.* 2.198-199)

Each member of the *demos* (ὄν δ' αὖ δῆμον τ' ἄνδρα) is immediately characterized in a similar fashion to the poet's characterization of the chaotic assembly (βοόωντά), which necessitates his harsher, more direct approach. As a result, and in direct contrast to the gentle words with which he addresses the *basileis* (ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσιν), Odysseus makes a display of physical force with the very symbol of chiefly power he received from Agamemnon: τὸν σκήπτρῳ ἐλάσασκεν. The difference between the way Odysseus addresses the *basileis* and the *laoi* is a reflection of the level of force and directness with which it is appropriate to demand obedience from different levels in the Homeric social hierarchy. By using Agamemnon's own *skeptron* in this more severe show of force,

Odysseus' call for a single ruler⁷³ immediately signals that Agamemnon is this single ruler.

In addition to a show of physical force against members of the *laoi*, Odysseus' direct commands in this second speech serve to draw a clear distinction between how an elite can interact with another elite and with a non-elite. This clearer distinction is not merely rhetoric in Odysseus' rebuke, but a series of direct references to the rightful rulership of Agamemnon. Odysseus cannot use such harsh rhetoric in his rebuke of the *gerontes* at the risk of causing another *neikos*. His choice of words in justifying why the *laoi* must be still and listen to the words of others (ἀτρέμας ἦσο καὶ ἄλλων μῦθον ἄκουε [*Il.* 2.200]) point more aggressively both to the agents of the test (*gerontes*) and importantly, Agamemnon himself:

οἱ σέο φέρτεροί εἰσι, σὺ δ' ἀπτόλεμος καὶ ἀναλκις
οὔτε ποτ' ἐν πολέμῳ ἐναρίθμος οὔτ' ἐνὶ βουλῇ:

[Listen to the words of others] who are better than you, you who are
unwarlike and lacking in valor, to be counted
neither in war nor in counsel (*Il.* 2.201-202)

Odysseus utilizes the term φέρτεροί in his rebuke, which directly recalls Nestor's warning to Achilles not to quarrel with Agamemnon:

μήτε σὺ Πηλείδῃ ἔθελ' ἐριζέμεναι βασιλῆϊ
ἀντιβίην, ἐπεὶ οὐ ποθ' ὁμοίης ἔμμορε τιμῆς

⁷³ *Il.* 2.205.

σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, ᾧ τε Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν.
εἰ δὲ σὺ καρτερός ἐσσι θεὰ δέ σε γείνατο μήτηρ,
ἀλλ' ὅ γε φέρτερός ἐστιν ἐπεὶ πλεόνεσσιν ἀνάσσει.

Do not, son of Peleus, be minded to quarrel against a king,
Since the scepter-bearing king doesn't have similar *time*,
To whom Zeus gave renown.
Although you are stronger, and a goddess birthed you,
He is better since he rules over more. (*Il.* 1.277-281)

Odysseus, just like Nestor, appeals to a *basileus*' quality of being *pherteros* with rightful rule. Nestor's appeal highlights the 'not-similar *time*' (οὐ ποθ' ὁμοίης ἔμμορε τιμῆς) and the divine authority (ᾧ τε Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν) that traditionally qualifies a *basileus* to rule. Although Nestor has to make a concession to placate Achilles' sense of pride (εἰ δὲ σὺ καρτερός ἐσσι), just as Odysseus does in his speech to the *basileis* during the test (οὐ σε ἔοικε κακὸν ὥς δειδίσσεσθαι), Odysseus makes no such effort in his rebuke of the *laoi*. His list of insulting adjectives (ἀπτόλεμος, ἄναλκις) justifies their exclusion from the elite *boule* (οὔτε ποτ' ἐν πολέμῳ ἐναρίθμους οὔτ' ἐνὶ βουλῇ) and thus his comparatively more severe use of force. Odysseus' two speeches refer to the elite *boule*, but his assertion that these members of the *laoi* were not in the *boule* implies a level of privileged information about Agamemnon's intent to which the *gerontes* were not even privy. Odysseus' rebuke, then, becomes an expression of elite solidarity (despite the deception) necessary for their retainment of order among the *laoi*. From the beginning of *Iliad* 2, Agamemnon recognizes the need to call a *boule* and subsequently behaves in a way that does not cause strife, but rather elite cooperation, and Odysseus' speech reflects

exactly the image Agamemnon hoped to project. Odysseus' appeal to the *boule*, in these two speeches, reminds us (and both the *basileis* and the *laoi*) that Agamemnon is executing his duties as a βουλευφόρον ἄνδρα to the liking of the *gerontes*. The *gerontes'* role, then, is to ensure that the *laoi* believe that Agamemnon has performed his duties as *basileus* with the full cooperation of the *gerontes*.

Odysseus ends his speech to the *laoi* with a programmatic statement advocating for centralized rule, utilizing terms of elite recognition that would appeal to the *laoi* and portray Agamemnon as a fit ruler. As noted above, Nestor warns Achilles that Agamemnon is *pherteros*, a word which Odysseus uses in his rebuke, and a word that in context recalls Nestor's justification for Achilles' obedience. Odysseus uses the term in the same context of subordination in *Iliad* 2. More pointedly, Odysseus calls specifically for the rule of a single *basileus* with the language of elite recognition employed both by Dream Nestor and Agamemnon in the *boule*:

οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη: εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω,
εἷς βασιλεύς, ᾧ δώκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω
σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφισι βουλευῆσι.

No good thing is a multitude of chiefs: let there be one lord,
one chief to whom the son of crooked-counseling Cronus has
given the scepter and judgements, to that he may take counsel for his people (*Il.* 2.204-206)

Odysseus asserts the need for a single, centralized ruler (εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, εἷς βασιλεύς), which is the most direct endorsement of Agamemnon's sole chiefship we see

in the poem thus far, deployed at a moment of chaos that is suffering from the rule of many (οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη).⁷⁴ Odysseus, in advocating so strongly for εἷς βασιλεύς during the confusion, introduces a false dichotomy between Agamemnon's centralized rule and the present anarchy. Odysseus also recalls Nestor's conciliatory speech to Achilles in *Iliad* 1 by appealing not only to a *basileus*' connection with Zeus, but the symbolic privileges of the singular *basileus* (ὃ δῶκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω σκήπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμυστας). This is possibly the most important part of Odysseus' speech. He connects his call for a single *basileus* to be Agamemnon himself through the deployment of the language of elite recognition. In bestowing the *skeptron* on Odysseus, Agamemnon is trusting in his *geron*'s ability to carry out the judgements of custom and law (θέμυστας) which the *laoi* may be hesitant to recognize in Agamemnon after he is discredited by Achilles. However, Odysseus is a prime candidate to command obedience among the *laoi*, owing to his popularity.⁷⁵ Agamemnon relies on Odysseus to uphold his rule in the interest of communal solidarity. Reminding the *laoi* that this single *basileus* (εἷς βασιλεύς), Agamemnon, is the one to whom Zeus gave the privileges of the *skeptron* and *themis* recalls the narrative digression on the *skeptron*'s genealogy. The very tool that Odysseus is using to restrain the *laoi* physically (τὸν σκήπτρον

⁷⁴ See Knox and Russo 1989, 156n10: "the desirability of one ruler rather than many is clearly not a perception to which Odysseus has just attained at this moment while actually observing Agamemnon at work. It is a preexisting argument he seizes upon in crisis, and only therefore can have its amusing, ironic, secondary effect." It should, in my reading, be understood not as an ironic call for centralized leadership in the face of failure, but an ideological statement that is meant to be a public show of loyalty to Agamemnon.

⁷⁵ *Il.* 2.272-273.

ἐλάσασκεν) represents the divine and civic privileges given to the man who owns it: Agamemnon. Odysseus stands in for Agamemnon, but this does not mean he takes his place as chief: by wielding the *skeptron* that has so clearly been linked to Agamemnon's sole rulership and advocating for the centralized rule of the man to whom Zeus gave this privilege, Odysseus accomplishes Agamemnon's test: to express, in no uncertain terms, a need for Agamemnon's continuing centralized leadership.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Agamemnon's test should be read with this theme of deliberate deception in mind as a continuation of an authority figure's exercise of his chiefly power. By taking into account the blow to his authority Achilles deals in *Iliad* 1, as well as the poet's depiction of brimming social disorder in *Iliad* 2, the tactic Agamemnon uses to subordinate both *basileus* and *laoi* is clearly an imposition of the arbitrary and fluid expression of the power of the chief, which I have noted in the narrative digression actually allows Agamemnon to temporarily cede his power to Odysseus. In the second narrative section, Agamemnon appeals to *themis* as a method of reaffirming his position in the social hierarchy among the elite *gerontes*. In doing so, he obliges them to make a public commitment of loyalty to him, but also neglects to reveal his *noos*, or intent, which Odysseus must do in his address to the *basileis* in the third narrative section. From the moment he meets with the *gerontes*, he is relying on their recognition of *themis*, the 'culturally-sanctioned representation of competence,' to gain their support. In their recognition of this arbitrary and fluid signifier of chiefship, Agamemnon leaves out his actual aim: to ensure their obedience by playing into the existing (but tenuous) structure of centralized authority. The effect of Agamemnon's skillful omission of his intent in the second narrative section and Odysseus subsequent revelation in the third narrative section should be as jarring to the audience as it would have been to the *basileis* themselves. We

in the audience are similarly taken by Agamemnon's rhetoric that it is *themis* to perform even the most unorthodox of tests until Odysseus, Agamemnon's surrogate, reveals to us wielding the symbol of chiefly authority, that Agamemnon expects their obedience and cooperation as subordinates.

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